TRADITIONAL MARTINIST ORDER

ORATORY SECTION

FIRST DEGREE

LESSON FOUR

"It is not the head which is necessary to advance in Truth; it is the heart."

© 2014 Supreme Heptad of the Traditional Martinist Order

FIRST DEGREE LESSON FOUR

CONCURRENCE

Consistent with this monograph devoted primarily to the symbolism of the temple, we suggest you read what is written about the Orient (East) and the Occident (West) in an encyclopedia of symbols. As you will see, these two cardinal points are not limited to indicating geographical directions. From an esoteric perspective, they represent spiritual principles related to the human quest. It is also the same for the North and South.

The Orient has always formed with the Occident an opposition between life and death: death being viewed as the opposite of life; death as balanced with birth; a necessary step, real or symbolic, as appropriate, a rebirth into the spiritual realm, that is to say to the discovery of real life. As an analogy to the rise and fall of the Sun as it travels through the sky are the two words "Orient" and "Occident." The word "Orient" comes from the Latin word "orior" ("I wake up," "I am born"); while the word "Occident" comes from the medieval word "occire" (to kill), which came from the Latin word "occidere" and before that "cadere" (to fall). Thus the word "Occident" has taken on the connotation of death. This is why, for example, the tombs of the Pharaohs, the royals and the high dignitaries of the Egyptian empire were constructed or dug on the left bank of the Nile; it is because this was the Occident.

In many mystical systems, especially in the philosophies and neo-Platonic theologies of Islamic Persia, the person born (rises) to the East of a symbolic geography, and passes to the West (falls) in a process of separation from one's soul, where it will be saved in its spiritual return to the East ("I wake up," "I am reborn"). In other words, our soul must travel over the Earth in the process of being reborn. This is a result of such a design that the East was chosen as the reference point of the four cardinal points: everything must find its true orientation, and we must know how to guide ourselves when we are lost.

Encyclopedia of Symbols

© 2014 Supreme Heptad of the Traditional Martinist Order

FIRST DEGREE LESSON FOUR

THE TEMPLE SYMBOLISM

Dear Supplicant,

I greet you before the Luminaries of the Traditional Martinist Order!

If you are a member of a Heptad or Atelier, you are already familiar with the layout of a Martinist temple, as it is in this mystical place that you study Martinism. If you study only in your home Oratory, you may not be familiar with a Martinist Temple unless you have been initiated in one. In either case, studying this monograph will enhance your understanding of its symbolism.

Since antiquity, humanity has dedicated specific places for communion with Divinity. These places were sanctuaries where the presence of God could be felt most strongly. For example, in Egypt, each temple was regarded as the abode of the god or goddess to whom it was dedicated: the temple at Philae was dedicated to Isis; the temple at Abydos was dedicated to Osiris; the temple at Edfu was dedicated to Horus; and the temple at Denderah was dedicated to Hathor. Each of these temples had a specific framework with various rituals directed by priests and priestesses, and even the pharaoh himself. In ancient Greece, which drew from the Egyptian tradition, temples were also devoted to the deities residing there: the temple at Delphi was dedicated to Apollo; the temple at Olympus was dedicated to Zeus; and the temple at Cape Sounion was dedicated to Poseidon. Many ceremonies performed in these sanctuaries were designed to obtain the favor of the gods and goddesses to whom they had been built. However, parts of each Temple were reserved for initiations and the study of the mysteries.

In Rome, such places were reserved for the interpretation of divine signs meant to guide people in their decisions. Men called *augurers* directed this divinatory work. They used a stick ending with a crosier to mark the place in the sky that would serve for their observations. Most often, it was while observing the flight of birds in this zone called the *templum*, that they would interpret the divine answers. Since this time, the word *templum* or *temple* has been used for any room or building dedicated to communion with the Divine and, more generally, for any place devoted to contemplation. In ancient Rome, any sacred space was called *fanum*, which literally means "consecrated place." From *fanum* descended the word *profane*, signifying all that is outside of a temple. By extension, this word was later applied to a person who has not been initiated into the Mysteries of the Temple.

The temples of antiquity were considered terrestrial replicas of the divine world and were the result of divine inspiration. Luxor Temple was an inspiration of Amenhotep III, son of Thutmose IV; and the Temple in Jerusalem was a divine vision revealed to David. The Cambodians attribute the construction of the temple of Angkor-Wat to the Hindu deities, Indra and Vishvakarman. Reflections of celestial archetypes and a synthesis of the macrocosm, the temples are also portals of access to Divine Light. In addition, their orientation with respect to the cardinal points has always been decisive, because it reflects a relationship between the cosmic order and the earthly order, between the divine world and the human world. According to an ancient custom, the entrance of a temple is generally situated in the west, or the occident; and facing east, or towards the Orient – the radiating Light.

In accordance with Tradition, a Martinist Temple is also oriented according to the cardinal points. It therefore possesses four basic symbolic points: East, West, North and South. You will note that your oratory is situated within these four points, which represent symbolic directions that contain, not a geographical area, but a cosmic space. In this regard, a temple, such as your Martinist Oratory, serves as a junction point between the material world and the spiritual world. To understand its symbolism, it is necessary to look at the apparent movement of the Sun in space as well as the significance of the cardinal points accorded to them within the Tradition.

The Sun rises in the East. It is for this reason that this point traditionally represents the source from where all light comes. The Star of the Day travels across the sky until it reaches its zenith in the South. This point symbolizes light in its fullness, and by extension a place of maturity and blossoming. The Sun then descends towards the West, and disappears below the horizon. That is why the West represents the invisible world, as opposed to the East, which symbolizes the visible world. The West also represents the place where the initiate, who has received the light, must now confront the darkness of the material world. As the Sun travels across the sky, it never passes by the North, which explains why this point is considered as the shadow and the darkness necessary for the germination of the seed. It is a place of gestation and preparation.

The Martinist Tradition considers that humanity, in our present state, does not have access to the East any longer, in the mystical sense of the word. Therefore, the terrestrial world only presents to us three horizons: the South, the North, and the West. This does not mean that it is now impossible for us to contemplate the East. We can do this, and we must acquire knowledge of divine laws and of Reintegration, for it is the only way to recover our original position and to rediscover the eternal East - source of all Light and Wisdom. This is the purpose of the Marinist teachings.

© 2014 Supreme Heptad of the Traditional Martinist Order

All Martinist temples have an altar with three candles that are lit at conventicles (meetings). In accordance with what you learned during the introductory ritual of this degree, they symbolize that our work is always placed under the auspices of the Grand Architect of the Universe, whose Wisdom, Strength and Beauty radiate through all creation. In our tradition, we recognize that these three candles represent Wisdom that designs the universe; Strength that forms the Universe; and Beauty that emanates the Universe. Humanity, having been created in the image of God, can manifest itself through these three qualities by what we think, say and do; if we are guided by pure aspirations.

The trinity of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty can be represented by the Hebrew Letter א (Aleph). This letter represents absolute Unity. It is composed of two י (Yod) placed on each side of the letter ו (Vav). Aleph has the numerical value of 1, 26 and 8. 1 because it is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 26 because it is the union of two Yods each having the numerical value of 10 and the letter Vav whose numerical value is 6; and 8 because the theosophical reduction of 26 gives us 8, which is the number of Ieschouah, Great Architect of the Universe. Note that 26 is also the number of the divine Tetragrammaton: יהוה (Yod He Vav He). The numerical value of each letter of the Tetragrammaton is 5 (He) + 6 (Vav) + 5 (He) + 10 (Yod) = 26.

Regarding the Grand Architect of the Universe, you may have noticed the figure at the beginning of each manuscript that uses the formula: A. L. G. D. יהשוה G. A. D. L. U. This traditional formula literally means: *A La Gloire De Ieschouah, Grand Architecte De L'Univers*. In future monographs, we will discuss who Ieschouah is and the role that He takes in Creation. For now we will say that this word connotes the Cosmic Christ, which Martinists consider both as a Force, a Principle and an Entity of nature and of spiritual origin.

Also on each monograph cover, you will find a symbol of the mask and sword. We will not focus here on the symbolism of the mask because it was presented to you in the introductory ritual for this degree. You will soon have an opportunity to deepen your understanding of this symbol. Regarding the sword, it represents the struggle we all must wage against our own weaknesses and our own vulnerabilities, until we become as pure as possible. The sword also symbolizes the struggle against corruption and ignorance, so that goodness and knowledge will triumph. It is also the symbol of fairness, righteousness and justice. In its most mystical application, the sword represents spiritual power and it is the instrument by which an initiator transmits the initiation. That is why the sword is used in certain rituals held in the Heptads and Ateliers of our Order.

© 2014 Supreme Heptad of the Traditional Martinist Order

Incense, which we suggest you burn when working in your Oratory, also has symbolic meaning. Incense represents our aspirations and our ideals. Thus, like the swirls spiraling upward, we elevate our soul to the spiritual world in order to receive inspiration. In addition, the scent of incense induces in us a state of receptivity for communion with the Divine. There is no rational explanation for this phenomenon. Perhaps incense is an archetype that induces in us the need to go within. Mystics have used incense since the earliest recorded times.

As you studied the symbols of this monograph, you may have felt a connection among a temple, your oratory and your physical body, which is itself a temple of the soul within you. Thus, just as we may enter a temple, or our oratory, we can go within at any moment and experience a communion with the invisible world. In this regard, we invite you to meditate over the coming weeks on this quote by Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin:

"We cannot take a step without meeting our altar or sanctum. That altar is always surrounded with lamps that never go out and must always burn as long as the altar itself exists. We always carry incense with us when we approach the altar; thus we are always able to enter into a state of devotion and thus bring about truer acts of our religion."

May you ever dwell in the Eternal Light of Divine Wisdom!

© 2014 Supreme Heptad of the Traditional Martinist Order

A. = A (To)

L. = La (The)

G. = Gloire (Glory)

D. = De (Of)

יהשוה **Hebrew letters: Yod He Shin Vav He = Ieschouah**

G. = Grand (Grand)

A. = Architecte (Architect)

D. = De (Of)

L. = L' (The)

U. = Univers (Universe)

In the coming days, we suggest that you meditate on the meaning of this traditional formula, keeping in mind that several generations of Martinists have done the same. In doing so, you will harmonize with the ideal that was theirs and which is henceforth your work in the service of Divine Wisdom.

SUMMARY

After carefully studying this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major points that you may want to reflect and meditate on during the coming days. If you have trouble understanding one of the points, return to the explanations given in the monograph. Immerse yourself in learning the points covered in this summary before proceeding with the study of the next monograph.

- Since antiquity, humanity has dedicated specific places for communion with Divinity. These places were sanctuaries where the presence of God could be felt most strongly.

- Reflections of celestial archetypes and a synthesis of the macrocosm, the temples are also portals of access to Divine Light.

- A Martinist Temple is oriented according to the cardinal points. It therefore has four fundamental and symbolic points: the East or Orient, the West or Occident, the North and the South.

- All Martinist temples have an altar with three candles that are lit at conventicles (meetings). In our tradition, we recognize that these three candles represent Wisdom that designs the universe; Strength that forms the Universe; and Beauty that emanates the Universe.

- The trinity of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty can be represented by the Hebrew Letter א (Aleph).

- The traditional formula: A. L. G. D. יהשוה G. A. D. L. U literally means: *A La Gloire De Ieschouah, Grand Architecte De L'Univers*.

- The sword represents the struggle we all must wage against our own weaknesses and our own vulnerabilities, until we become as pure as possible. The sword also symbolizes the struggle against corruption and ignorance, so that goodness and knowledge will triumph.

- Incense represents our aspirations and our ideals. Thus, like the swirls spiraling upward, we elevate our soul to the spiritual world in order to receive inspiration.

- There are parallels among a temple, a Martinist oratory and our body, which is itself a temple of the soul that is within us. Thus, similar to entering a temple, or our oratory, we can go within at any moment and experience a communion with the invisible world.

Issued by the Grand Heptad of the English Speaking Jurisdiction
of the Traditional Martinist Order
1342 Naglee Avenue, San Jose, California 95191

This monograph is the copyright of the Supreme Grand Lodge of the Rosicrucian Order AMORC under the emblems appearing on the covers which are legally protected and ipso facto protect all engraved, printed, electronic, photocopied, photographed or typed copies of its covers and contents. It is not sold but loaned to the member as a privilege of membership. Legal title, ownership and right of ownership of this monograph are and remain those of the Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC, to which it must be returned on simple demand. All matters covered in this monograph including symbols, titles and passwords, are strictly confidential and are communicated to the member for his or her sole and exclusive information. Any other use, or attempted use, may terminate active and regular affiliation with AMORC, which is the only organization authorized to publish this monograph.